

**Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum**

# **American Indian Basketry**

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## Introduction

The world was all water and the Great Spirit looked down. He threw large amounts of mud up out of the water, and that made land. He made the trees to grow, and he made Man out of mud, giving him instructions on what he should do. When the man was lonesome, the Great Spirit made a Woman for his partner, and taught her how to tan hides, to find roots and to gather berries. While the Woman slept, she dreamed that the Great Spirit gave her one more gift to help her and the Man to survive—in a little woven container. He placed all the arts of design and skill for making baskets to be passed on to all their descendants.

... Indian legend

Archeologists have determined that the making of baskets predated even the use of pottery. In the book, *Indian Basketry*, G. W. James suggests that basketry was a result of a natural progression from utilizing shells or gourds, to strengthening these receptacles with fiber nets to creating baskets. It was the women of the tribe who fabricated baskets for such diverse purposes as carrying (anything from apples to infants), cooking, storing, winnowing, and weaving. These women were truly artists who created functional works of beauty from the materials at hand: weeds, reeds, roots, baleen or bark. The majority of baskets were also decorated in some fashion, whether by stitch variation, diversity in colors or weaving materials, or by adding ornamentation of embroidery, shells, porcupine quills, beads or feathers. In a culture that depended on the rudiments of basketry for their survival, it is amazing to consider the loveliness and grace exhibited in the results of this task.

The baskets pictured in this book represent a portion of the extensive basket collection displayed at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum in Coshocton, Ohio. David and John Johnson, natives of Coshocton County, traveled and collected extensively during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of their areas of interest was the American Indian, with a particular fascination directed towards their ubiquitous basketry. This turned out to be a timely interest. Although some tribes continued their basket-weaving heritage, the skill was fated to virtually vanish within three generations after contact with the advanced technologies of European-American "civilization."

Both the collection and this book are organized according to tribe, beginning with the westernmost (Alaskan Inuit) and moving east as far as the Great Lakes region (Ojibwa).

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Inuit

Stretched across the upper regions of North America, the Inuit are the northernmost of the American Indian tribes. Scientists believe these "latecomers" might have remained in the northern regions because they were familiar with the frigid maritime conditions. Other tribes described the Inuit as "eaters of raw meat," and when the Jesuit missionaries arrived this was transposed into "Eskimo." In addition to the tattooed stripes women of the tribe wore, both sexes wore lip labrets (plugs made of shell, ivory, wood or sandstone), through holes pierced at the corners of the mouth.

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Rigidly constructed 19th century basket with attached lid. Four leather straps decorate upper half of basket and lid; blue bead secures lid. This basket shape is often referred to as the "ginger-jar" shape

H: 10.5" D: 9.33"

Original Collection



19th century balen trinket box with handle. When freshly "harvested" from the interior of a Right Whale's mouth, baleen is a pliable sieve like material. The Inuit mold the baleen and allow the material to dry and harden into the desired shape. This vessel is sewn with sinew and adorned with six ivory carvings of seals; handle is baleen covered wood.

H: 7" D: 4.5"

Original Collection

19th century coiled grass basket with lid, decorated with beadwork designs. Sometimes beads such as these were sewn to animal skin before attachment to a basket; in other instances claws of birds were used for decoration.

H: 9.75" D: 8.125"

Original Collection



19th century coiled basket, rigidly constructed of tightly woven bundles of lyne grass and decorated with seals carved from ivory. The Point Barrow homeland of the western Inuit is the source of most of JHM's Inuit basket collection, even though the use of coiled beachgrass in basketry is a method found as far away as the Labrador Inuit.

H: 7.0" D: 7.5"  
 tion

Original Collec-



19th century coiled storage basket with intricate geometric designs of dyed grass. The western Inuit used mostly wild rye, lyne grass and willow where available. As well as the construction of beautiful baskets and tools, storytelling was essential ingredients in the Inuit culture.

H: 9.75" D: 14.33"  
 tion

Original Collec-

## Attu

As a part of the Aleutian tribe, the Attu made their home on the Aleutian islands, which extend about 1000 miles westward from the Alaskan mainland. This island group became adept at using their limited resources to the fullest, such as fashioning waterproof coats from seal intestines. The Japanese occupied this tribe's island at the start of WWI, and the people were subsequently interred in Japan.



Basketry whale form. Tough grasses were finely twined to create an item most likely used for trade purposes.

H: 3.25" L: 13" W : 3.25"

Original Collection



## Aleut

The native inhabitants of the Aleutian islands were called the Aleuts. Their communal homes were constructed of a combination of whalebone or driftwood, and sod. The Aleut culture has had to survive slavery by the Russians, the dreadful effects of the 1919 flu epidemic, and internment by the U.S. government during WWII.

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19th century twined openwork basket of wild rye decorated with wool. The flower motif is created by false embroidery, a technique in which the design is only applied at the surface. Wool was introduced to this tribe by Russian traders. The Aleutian fabric-like baskets could easily be folded for transport and unfolded for use.

H: 8.5" D: 8"

Original Collection



19th century twined trinket basket with lid; worsted false embroidery decorations. Two strand twining is a signature technique of the Aleut Tribe.

H: 9.25" D: 6.33"

Original Collection

19th century flexible twined personal storage basket. Lid features raised knob as continuation of the weave. The Aleut wove baskets from beach grasses gathered in early summer to be dried, stored, then split to the fineness of thread.

H: 11.5" D: 12.75"

Original Collection



## Haida

The Haida (or Haidu) lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia and the Dall and Prince of Wales Islands off the Alaskan coast. This tribe is more noted for its bentwood boxes and totems crafted from cedar—a plentiful resource—than for its basketry.

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Tightly twined 19th century hat of spruce root. Differing twining techniques result in two separate weaving patterns, with painted totemic design of raven prominent.

H: 7" D: 13"

Original Collection

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## Tlingit

The Tlingit divided themselves into district clans, sparsely populating their southeast Alaskan territory. Their winter home, constructed of wood and the entrance often flanked by carved totems, contained a steam bath. Summer weather found the members of this tribe turning to the nomadic life supported by hunting, fishing and trading with Russian colonists.

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19th century twined and latticed, flexible basket decorated with designs in red, brown, cream, and green. To dye weaving materials, the Tlingit used various natural substances such as alder bark, blueberry, hemlock bark, and wolf moss.

H: 5.5" D: 5.75"

Original Collection







19th century twined basket decorated with several bands of geometric figures. Finely woven bark or spruce root, split and soaked, achieved a sturdier vessel than those woven of grasses. In addition, as a twining material, the spruce root gave the basket a smoother finish. Tlingit false embroidery designs were most often executed in geometric patterns including frets, triangles, crosses and blocks.

H: 9.5" D: 9.5"

Original Collection

19th century twined treasure or trinket box with "rattle-top" lid. Decorated in false embroidery of natural and dyed red, green, and purple grasses; Raven's Tail design on sides. Woven into the lid is a space into which seeds or tiny pebbles from geese gizzards were inserted. Should the basket be disturbed, these made a slight noise to alert the owner.

H: 3.5" D: 8"

Original Collection



19th century twined basket, slightly tapered, with false embroidery whale motif in dyed red and natural grasses. The smaller basket sizes were more common after the advent of traders—dimensions had to be reduced in order to meet the demands on production.

H: 5.75" D: 7.5"

Original Collection

19th century twined basket with lid. Woven design in red, orange, green and brown, plus false embroidery in purples and blues produced by using a copper oxide. Tlingit basketry is distinguished by fine twining and thin-walled construction.

H: 6.25" D: 7"

Original Collection



## Salish

The Salish tribal homeland extended from British Columbia to Washington, with most of their basket-work originating from the river valley areas where cedar was plentiful. The tribes of this resource-rich area had a legend explaining the seemingly unlimited amounts of returning salmon each spring: skeletons of the salmon were restored to the river, where they were transformed back into the race of salmon people living beneath the waters, to be transfigured to fish yet again next spring to feed the tribe.

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Rigid 19th century coiled basket with lid attached by hide ties. Salish weavers coiled cedar root over cedar splints to obtain sturdy containers, or over bundles of fine roots and grasses for a tighter weave necessary for cooking baskets.

H: 9" D: 6"

Original Collection



19th century coiled cradleboard with all over designs of black and red. The cradlebasket was carried horizontally across the back, unlike vertical cradleboards familiar to other tribes, by means of a knotted and woven tumpline such as the one shown here. The cowrie shell beads serve to cushion the forehead from the weight of the suspended basket.

H: 6" L: 10" W: 7.25"

Original Collection



Large 19th century coiled basket with intricate designs of black fern stems and natural orange straw. Intricate designs were produced by nipping darker colored straw or bark into the stitch.

H: 11.25" L: 20" W: 14"

Original Collection



19th century coiled berry-gathering basket with hide carrying straps. "Snake-track" design imbricated in black and naturally light-colored straw.

L: 10.25" W: 8.5"

Original Collection



19th century simple twined basket of coarse grasses and roots. Possibly used by southern Salish tribe in clam gathering.

H: 7.25" D: 9.5"

Original Collection

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## Nootka

Located in western Vancouver Island, this Northwest Coast tribe lived in an area rich in natural resources including the sea, rivers, forests and abundant game.

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19th century twined gathering basket. Base of basket is woven in signature checker-plaited weaving of cedar bark; the remainder of materials are grasses, both natural and dyed.

H: 7" D: 11.125"

Original Collection





19th century basketry covered crockery jar. It was a common practice in this tribe to cover trade-derived empty bottles, jars, etc., with basketry.

H: 7" D: 4.75"

Original Collection

19th century twined trinket basket with lid. W rapped twining was the most common weaving technique of the Nootka tribe. Baskets were woven of cedar bark and grasses, then grasses were wrapped around each intersection covering the bark. Multi-colored checkerwork weaving and false embroidery embellish the basket.

H: 2.25" D: 3.75"

Original Collection



19th century twined hat with inner cap. These hats were worn by tribe members when fishing ocean waters, or simply as a protection from the abundant rainfall of this area. Decorated with red, blue and orange horizontal stripes.

H: 8" D: 12.5"

Original Collection

19th century twined basket with lid. Common designs incorporated into this tribe's basketry include variations of mainland animals and marine life reflecting their coastal existence.

H: 3.125" W : 3.75" L: 5.75"

Original Collection





## Makah

The north Washington coastal Makah were a whaling tribe. Much of their sea-based lifestyle was preserved by a giant mudslide which buried an entire village in the 15th century. Log canoes, harpoons, lances, woven hats, and houses constructed of cedar, all preserved in the wet clay, gave clues to the lives and customs of the pre-historic Makah, much of whose lifestyle remained unchanged until the advent of the settler.

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Bowl-shaped basket of wrapped twining with loops at rim. This particular style is also described as "fish-trap" weaving, possibly a descendant of the weaving utilized in forming earlier wicker fish traps.

H: 3.75" D: 7.5"

Original Collection



Small squared 19th century basket of wrapped twining, also described as "bird-cage" weave. This basket has an excellent illustration of checkerwork weave on base.

H: 5.5" D: 3.25"

Original Collection

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## Klamath

The Klamath and Modoc tribes combined and blended after being confined to a reservation in south central Oregon in the late 19th century. By the mid-twentieth century, the government's "termination policy" to cut off federal assistance severely affected the remnants of this tribe.

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19th century twined conically shaped basket. In order to produce colored patterns, the Klamath buried grasses in mud springs to attain black, and used moss to dye porcupine quills yellow.

H: 8" D: 9"

Original Collection





Finely twined 19th century basket featuring diagonal stepped stripes and one band of open conjoined diamonds. The basket was constructed of tule (cattail) with an overlay of other reeds; cotton binding covers the rim.

H: 10" D: 16.5"

Original Collection

19th century twined utilitarian basket. The turned back warp and interlaced woof were techniques often employed on borders, lending a braided appearance.

H: 3.5" D: 14.5"

Original Collection



19th century twined hat with bands of opposing triangles. Hats were a common clothing apparel of the Klamath woman.

H: 5" D: 7.33"

Original Collection

19th century twined basket of tule, with sides flaring from a raised base. A versatile resource, tule could also be bundled together to construct the boats of the Klamath.

H: 4" D: 7.75"

Original Collection





## Wasco

The Wasco tribe was found in the Columbia River Valley. Many of its basket motifs shared the same design as pictographs and petroglyphs discovered in the area.

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This cylindrical flexible twined basket, known as a "sally bag," incorporates both human and animal forms into its design. The Wasco tribe used cattails and native hemp to weave these pliable baskets.

H: 8.25" W : 5.5"

Original Collection



19th century twined sally bag covered with repeated motifs: butterflies, humans, duck, deer, etc. The Wasco's weaving technique lent itself to creating angular geometric animal forms. Designs used a dyed fiber resembling corn husks.

H: 8.25" D: 5.5"

Original Collection

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## Nez Perce

Located at what is now the junction of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, the Nez Perce were one of the earliest tribes to adapt to the advent of horses and became expert horse breeders. The corn husk bags for which the tribe is noted were excellent for carrying essential items on horse or by foot.

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19th century twined hat fashioned from hemp. Dyed rushes form the red and blue stepped design ornamented with trade wool. The short length of hide on the apex was for hanging the hat when not in use.

H: 6.125" D: 5.75"

Original Collection





19th century twined bag. Native hemp fibers were used to weave this flexible bag with dyed husks or multi-colored yarns forming the geometric designs. Softer hued designs, colored using native clays, decorated earlier versions. Weavers often created separate designs on each side of the bag, as shown here.

H: 11" D: 9.5"

Original Collection

## Shasta

The Shasta tribe, as might be assumed from the name, came from the Mount Shasta area of Northern California. Divisions within this area included the Hat Creek region and the Pit River region, whose inhabitants dug pits along the river trails to capture game.

19th century twined basket of hazel and split willow, dating from 1820 to 1840. This large grain storage basket displays a diagonal stepped design.

H: 28.5" D: 31"

Original Collection





19th century twined burden basket with a rim reinforced by a wood splint. Burden baskets were suspended from a tumpline across the forehead.

H: 14" D: 16"

Original Collection

19th century twined mush bowl, decorated with irregular golden bands of squaw grass. Materials available to the Shasta ranged from mountain shrubs and vines to river valley willows and rushes. Designs were often worked in overlays of squaw grass, redbud bark or fern stem.

H: 4.25" D: 5.75"

Original Collection



19th century twined basket. Grasses colored with dye derived from alderbark form chevron designs; fabric at rim.

H: 4" D: 3.6"

Original Collection

19th century twined burden basket with a band of animal shapes encircling the rim. Since the tail points down, these figures can be identified as horses; an upward tail denotes a deer or a dog.

H: 13" D: 12.5"

Original Collection





## Pomo

The Pomo of Northern California were not overly troubled by the early Spanish missionaries to the South, but Russians later decreased the tribe's numbers drastically. By the 19th century both men and women of the tribe were weaving baskets for trade as a means of survival. They were the only tribe to produce baskets in all four weaving techniques: coiled, plaited, wicker and twined.

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19th century twined child carrier of the "sit down" variety. Bundles of grasses were strategically placed in the bottom of this reed constructed carrier.

H: 21" L: 12.5" W : 10" Original Collection



19th century hopper basket constructed of grape vine. The open base allowed the basket to be luted to a grinding rock when milling acorns and wild seed.

H: 8" D: 16.75"

Original Collection

This rare unfinished twined basket illustrates the wrap and twining method. Although incomplete, the basket's distinguishable design motifs include eyes, mountains and snakes. 19th century.

H: 12" D: 8.75"

Original Collection



19th century ceremonial gift basket, completely covered with lark or flicker and duck feathers. The rim and handle are made of clam shell beads, and shell pendants are suspended by chains of abalone.

H: 2" D: 4.125"

Original Collection



19th century coiled ceremonial or gift basket. The basket is adorned with an all over woven one-inch quail topknot design, with actual tufts from quail and woodpecker inserted into the weft. Clusters of clam shell beads decorate the rim. Clamshell beads were often used as basket decorations and were one type of shell used for money. The diameter, thickness and polish of a shell determined its value.

H: 2.5" L: 14.5" W : 8"

Original Collection



18th century twined storage basket used to hold food and other commodities. The design exemplifies the popular motif of water descending from mountains.

H: 15" D: 22.5"

Original Collection

19th century twined burden basket constructed of grape vine with woven turpline. This conical basket was sturdy enough to carry loads of wood and could last through the lifetime of the user.

H: 22.75" D: 23"

Original Collection



19th century twined burden basket. Rim stiffened with a wood splint coiled to the edge. This basket was valued as an implement and as a symbol of prestige.

H: 18" D: 25"

Original Collection

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## Yokut

The Yokut tribe lived along the Tule River of Central California. The Yokut used long blades of grass for the framework of their baskets, weaving in finely split pine roots to achieve white coloration and willow bark to achieve brown.

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19th century coiled gambling tray. Tribal recreation included rolling pitch-filled walnut shells, distinguishable by the varying number of abalone chips contained in each. The walnut shells were used in a counting game played by the women who tossed and caught the nutshell dice pitch-side up.

H: 1.5" D: 21.25"

Original Collection



## Tulare

The Tulare, a division of the Yokut tribe, occupied the San Joaquin Valley of Central California. The influx of miners and ranchers to this territory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gradually crowded out the native people.

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Bottleneck (trademark shape of the Yokut) coiled basket with a red wool ruff. The tribe raised sheep and dyed the wool. Documentation accompanying this basket states that it was woven by Umatilla, prior to an 1899 earthquake. The black and red design of arrows pointing toward base tells this legend: "Our men ascend the hills in peace, hunting game of the earth." Further documentation states, "County Riverside, CA. Made in 25 days, with 14-20 stitches to the inch."

H: 3" D: 5.75"

Barberton Public Library



19th century coiled utility bowl featuring diagonal stepped pattern fashioned in brown (redbud) and black (fern stem) with scattered quail topknots and tufts of red wool.

H: 6" D: 12"

Original Collection

19th century coiled cooking bowl that displays the rattlesnake design above alternating motifs. In weaving their basketry both Yokut and Tulare tribes used sunac, redbud and bracken fern to sew together small bundles of rushes or grasses.

H: 4.75" D: 14.25"

Original Collection



## Maidu

This tribe of northeastern California was located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Its name was acquired when an author arbitrarily assigned them the title "Maidu," which in the Maidu language meant "man." The gold rush brought greater devastation to this tribe than to others as the miners drove away game and destroyed fish habitat with their mining methods. Survivors became slaves on the ranch of a successful miner turned rancher, John Bidwell. They eventually were "saved" by replacing their language with English, their homes with wooden structures, their basketry with sewing and their cultural traditions with those of their owners.

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19th century coiled basket of willow and redbud. The Maidu wove both twined and coiled basketry, but for the most part, only coiled examples have survived. The decorations on this basket symbolize quail plumes.

H: 11" D: 19.5 "

Original Collection

Shallow 19th century coiled tray, a common utility form of the Maidu. The circular bands were left incomplete, a practice they believed prevented blindness.

H: 3.5" D: 15"

Original Collection



19th century coiled basket. Maidu baskets were often spherical; this one is distinctive for its pedestal base. The Maidu utilized a variety of materials in their basketry such as hazelnut, maple, redbud, willow and bracken fern.

H: 3.125" L: 5.125" W : 2.625"

Original Collection

## Hupa

The basketry of the Hupa and Yurok, both from Northern California, is practically indistinguishable. Though their language differed greatly, both used the same materials and techniques in basketry. The Hupa lived between the Pacific Ocean and the Trinity River, and the Yurok lived farther North in the area bordering the Klamath River. It was customary for women of the Hupa to have tattooed chins, while both the men and women of this tribe practiced ear piercing.

---

19th century openwork twined basket. A band with geometric designs borders the reinforced rim. Use of geometric shapes and figures, particularly when arranged in diagonals or chevrons, was characteristic of an earlier age.

H: 16.75" D: 19"

Original Collection



19th century twined "dance" basket with a design rendered in maidenhair fern stem. The ends are covered with hide, feather and fetish suspensions. Women were the healers of the Hupa, and a shaman medicine bag or basket often held talismans such as colored pebbles, animal claws, snakeskins, etc.

H: 15" D: 6"

Original Collection



19th century twined cradleboard for a doll. Most Hupa and Yurok basketry used California hazel, willow twigs and pine root, peeling the stems of tough young trees.

H: 14.5" D: 10"

Original Collection



19th century openwork twined storage basket with willow for base. This tribe used California hazel for the warp (ribs) and usually yellow or sugar pine root for the weft.

H: 9.5" D: 10"

Original Collection

19th century twined hat. Hupa hats were normally smaller than other tribes' hats, as the people were of slight build. These tightly woven caps protected their foreheads when employing the tumplines to support heavily loaded burden baskets.

H: 4.5" D: 8"

Original Collection



## California Mission

The Mission tribes inhabited the coastal regions of Southern California. These tribes were the first to come in contact with the Spanish as they entered the area. In the 18th century the Mission tribes were ultimately forced to leave their rich hunting grounds to supply field labor to the Spanish and learn the Roman Catholic religion. Both the missionaries and the accompanying military created a demand for their baskets.

---

Coiled basket with design of human figures. The black color was usually attained by burying juncus rush in mud until the desired shade was achieved.

H: 3.5" D: 14.25"

Original Collection



19th century coiled basket with sloping shoulders, constructed of willow, juncus rush and devil's claw. Polychromatic geometric designs were achieved by using natural shades of these materials. While the coastal dwellers strictly used juncus rush for weaving black designs, those living further inland sometimes employed devil's claw.

H: 3" D: 8.75"

Original Collection

19th century coiled tray with obvious mission influence demonstrated by the priest figures. Large sturdy bowls such as this were used to carry and store foods like acorns and grains. When being transported, the basket was enclosed in a hammock-like net, supported from a tumpoline and hung on the carrier's back.

H: 5" D: 18"

Original Collection





## W asho

The W asho were located in Nevada. Rather than depending on agriculture, they harvested wild crops such as acorns, pine nuts, grass seeds and roots. The gathering and preparing of these foodstuffs as well as basket making, were time consuming processes.

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19th century deep coiled storage basket of single rod construction. The rim is finished in a diagonal stitch unique to the W asho. Sagebrush, butterflies, and birds in flight are depicted using devil's claw.

H: 9.5" D: 6"

Original Collection

19th century coiled basket fashioned of willow splints. The geometric motifs were formed with fern or redbud.

H: 4" D: 8.25"

Original Collection



19th century spherical coiled basket. With symmetrical designs of trees, birds, teepees and mountains, this basket is an excellent example of even stitching for which the W asho tribe is noted. The globe form was popular with both the W asho and their northerly neighbor, the Maidu.

H: 2.5" D: 6.75"

Original Collection



## PAIUTE

The Northern Paiute, also known as Paviotso, were a large Nevada tribe who traveled in small bands, gathering scattered resources in the Great Basin region. They were the originators of the Ghost Dance religion, a belief born out of desperation which gave its followers hope that not only would the buffalo return but the white man would disappear. The various Ghost Dance symbols painted on government-issued cotton or linen material supposedly made the wearer impervious to enemy gunfire.

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19th century gathering tray or wand. Constructed of split willow, rush stems and other plants, the Paiute used this basket to whip grass seeds into a gathering basket.

H: 24.5" D: 8"

Original Collection



19th century twined water jar covered with linen cloth. Decorations include painted symbols, glass beads, and red and blue trade cloth at the rim. Ghost Dance article.

H: 14.25" D: 8"

Original Collection

19th century water jar tightly twined and coated with pinon gum. The leather handle is secured through two horsehair lugs woven into the side. The rounded base enables it to rest solidly on sand. The Paiute used materials such as sisal willow, squaw weed, skunk weed, tule root and martynia in their weaving.

H: 5" D: 5"

Original Collection



## Mono

The Mono tribe of mid-California moved seasonally from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to nearby desert areas. Part of the Shoshone language group, they were a peaceful people who spent much of their existence gathering precious resources for food, and most of their basketry illustrates this need.

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Closely twined 19th century carrying jar for transporting seeds or pinenuts. Horsehair lugs are worked into the shoulder of the jar from which carrying straps may be attached.

H: 12" D: 7.75"

Original Collection

19th century coiled basket constructed of reed. Such baskets were common to the Indian home for storage and carrying. The diagonal red and black stepped design is often used to represent streams as they run down the mountains.

H: 3.25" D: 7.75"

Original Collection



19th century oval basket twined with willow. Suspensions of beadwork and animal claws decorate rim and sides.

H: 2.5" W : 6.25" L: 7"

Original Collection

Large 19th century water bottle, tightly twined. Decorated with blue beads, the bottle was covered with pitch to make it watertight. All bottles were designed to balance when laid on their side so that even a youngster could tip them to obtain water without spilling. Varied sizes were constructed according to purpose and length of journey. A large bottle such as this would probably remain in camp.  
H:16" D: 12.5" Or iginal Collection



## Papago

The Papago of southern Arizona were desert dwellers. Their livelihood depended greatly on stock raising and the "dry farming" of flood plains. Their name is derived from the Pima word for "bean people," because, in their dependence on flash flood irrigation, the bean plant came through when rains were too little or too late for any other crop. Should the weather fail them entirely, they existed on cactus. Two clans comprised this tribe: the Coyote and Buzzard.



19th century deep coiled basket woven of white split willow and black devil's claw. Human figures with joined hands circle the base. The Papago tribe used only naturally occurring colors, never dyeing basket materials. While other tribes gathered devil's claw from the wild, the Papago traditionally raised it as a crop.

H: 8.5" D: 7"

Original Collection



## Navajo

Before European influence, the Navajo were an agricultural tribe. Once the Spanish introduced domesticated sheep, this tribe concentrated on sheepherding, hence basketry became secondary to the many steps necessary in producing woven goods. Their name for themselves, "Dinneh," means "the real people."

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19th century coiled ceremonial tray. The break in design that occurs opposite the opening in the finished herringbone edge is characteristic of this tribe. When in use, the line formed between these two points always pointed East and West.

H: 6.25" D: 17.25"

Original Collection



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## Hopi

The Hopi settled three mesas at a northern Arizona location. An agricultural people, they lived in permanent homes at the base of each of these cliffs. While those of the First Mesa constructed few baskets, relying instead on pottery, the basketry of the Second Mesa was normally coiled, and the Third Mesa baskets were usually wicker-work. The early Spanish explorers introduced fruit trees to the Hopi tribe whose name meant "gentle people."

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Twilled work ring constructed by placing one woof strand over two or more warp strands. Ring could be placed on the head in order to stabilize carried water, or on the ground to keep a food bowl or water basket upright. Yucca fibers were split and plaited to achieve this flat weave.

H: 1.37 D: 7.75"

Barberton Public Library



19th century coiled basket with steeply sloped lid. The checkered design was created with yucca and galleta grass colored with vegetable dyes.

Base - H: 5" D: 8"

Lid - H: 6" D: 7.37"

Original Collection



19th century screening basket. Twilled work; rim re-inforced with wood splint. This basket was used to sieve sand from sun-parched corn. All three mesas made these baskets from yucca leaves.  
H: 4.25" D: 14" Original Collection

Deep coiled basket with lid; 19th century. Dyed yucca fibers are sewn over grass bundles to form deer-like figures in design. Only five colors were typically used in Second Mesa basketry. Three were naturally obtained from the yucca plant—white (inside leaf), pale yellow (sun-dried white), and green (outside leaf). The other two colors were derived from dyes. To create black dye, sunflower seeds were combined with pinon gum and ochre, then smoked over burning black wool. To make red dye, a variety of plants were combined and set with native alum, then smoked over burning white wool in a closed container.  
H: 8.25" D: 7.75" Original Collection



19th century wickerwork plaque with Kachina design. The plaque was woven of wild currant and peeled rabbit brush dyed red (purple maize dye) and dark brown (blend of dyes). The Hopi tribe used the Kachina as a visual aid to instruct members about their ceremonies and social customs.  
H: .5" D: 17.75" Original Collection

## Havasupai

The Havasupai of the Yuman language family lived in Arizona along the Colorado River, particularly in the Cataract Canyon area. This peaceful tribe was provided with defense from marauding neighbors by the inaccessibility of this site. Agricultural in nature, they raised a wide variety of crops including the typical corn, beans, melons, sunflowers and squash, as well as livestock and fruit trees long before Europeans reached their land.

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19th century coiled tray using devil's claw to form design. Similar in construction to Apache trays, Havasupai basketry is distinguishable by the geometric designs rather than the Apache animal figures. Usually created with the twining weaving technique, a coiled Havasupai tray is rare.  
H: 1.25" D: 10.75" Original Collection



19th century sturdy twined burden basket with two wood splints coiled around the rim, another feature characteristic of this tribe. (Photo shows basket resting on its rim.)  
H: 22.5" D: 23" Original Collection

19th century coiled basket with black triangles at base and black diamonds outlined in red near rim. The Havasupai tribe often used peeled martynia pod (devil's claw) for black designs.  
H: 4.75" D: 7.5" Original Collection





## Chemehuevi

The Arizona and Utah Chemehuevi (or Chemehuevi) were a mysterious tribe, their political and social history relatively unknown. Closely associated with the Mojave Desert, they are sometimes called the Southern Paiute. Most of their daily life was spent wandering in search of food, water and wood.

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19th century coiled jar. The black rim illustrates a signature method of this tribe. Most design features are significant purely as identification of individual weavers. Typical uniform construction of willow and devil's claw.

H: 6.5" D: 6.125"

Original Collection

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## Pima

The Pima of Arizona were semi-nomadic. Their name was derived from the region they roamed, entitled pimeria by the Spaniards. They harvested cactus, a major part of their diet, and raised corn, beans and squash by irrigation. They also raised cotton and later lent their name to a particular refined strain of the plant used to make fabric.

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19th century coiled bowl with traditional Pima black center and rim. Vertical black bands and figures were executed in devil's claw. The black devil's claw, or martynia, was utilized at stress points because of its durability. A noted Pima weaver often used "the dancers" motif portraying a number of human figures circling the bowl.

H: 6" D: 10.5"

Original Collection

19th century coiled jar. Most Pima baskets were made for trade purposes, and a maze-like fret design was occasionally found. Use of the maze in this tribe is credited to the legend of "Siux-hu Ki," a hero who, after a drop in popularity, would confuse his enemies by taking convoluted paths to return home. By following the maze, the center of the basket can be reached without crossing any lines.

H: 6.5" D: 11.25"

Original Collection



19th century coiled jar featuring a diagonal geometric design, a stylized version of the popular whirlwind pattern most commonly exhibited in Pima trays.

H: 16.75" D: 12"

Original Collection



19th century coiled wheat basket displaying a design resembling the swastika. Variations of this design were found in both American Indian and Asian cultures centuries before it was adopted as the Nazi symbol. The wheat basket was the most frequently used basket of the tribe, employed for winnowing grain or sifting impurities from flour.

H: 3.25 D: 15"

Original Collection

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## Apache

The Apaches were probably most noted for their fearless and relentless protection of their lands. Basically nomadic, they were located in portions of Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico. Though sharing a common language, individual Apache groups, such as the Jicarilla, Mescalero, San Carlos, and Western, were influenced differently by contacts with neighboring tribes. Unique to the Apache was the death ritual, which included burning the home and possessions of the deceased immediately following the burial.

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19th century coiled storage jar constructed of devil's claw and cottonwood or willow. Apache baskets often exhibit the symmetrical, well-balanced patterns seen here. Sometimes, however, random marks such as a dark block were woven into the design. Although not visible in this photo, this basket has inexplicable white coils within an otherwise totally black circle.

H: 8" D: 11"

Original Collection







19th century twined burden basket of split willow and devil's claw. The strength of this type of container was derived from its construction: closely woven uniform willow twigs reinforced by four larger ribs at regular intervals. This type of basket was used to gather foodstuffs or carry heavier burdens such as firewood.

H: 16" D: 9.25"

Original Collection

19th century coiled jar with vertical rows of crawling insets. A decoration such as this was hoped to keep bugs away from food stored in the vessel.

H: 12" D: 9.25"

Original Collection



19th century "money basket." Twined weave with rawhide handle. Legend has it that this basket belonged to the famed Apache chief, Geronimo.

H: 6.5" D: 6.5"

Original Collection

19th century coiled bowl illustrates the common Apache practice of using black weaving materials at both center and rim. The repeated horse motif, in this case both saddled and unsaddled, became a familiar design after the Spanish introduced the horse to this tribe in the 17th century. Not only horses, but figures of dogs and humans were popular subjects of the Apache. This basket would have been used for storage of items such as acorns, corn and grass.

H: 4" D: 11"

Original Collection







19th century coiled olla , a Spanish term indicating its bulging, jar-like shape. Closely woven and lined with pitch for water storage. Many Apache symbols may have been acquired by adopting the traditions of the weavers captured from other tribes. The equal-armed crosses decorating this basket would have predated the use of the cross-and-crescent motif connected with the Daagodigha' religious movement practiced from 1903-1908.  
H: 30" D: 26" Original Collection

19th century coiled jar . The willow twigs used for the warp were gathered, peeled, and split into sections, then stored in bundles. Three twigs—one large and two smaller ones—are arranged to control the contour of the basket. Weaving large twigs between two smaller ones created an inward curve while large twigs in front of smaller ones curved the wall outward.  
H: 10" D: 11" Original Collection



19th century coiled olla with unusual ticked rim. In addition to the commonly used devil's claw and willow, a reddish brown color was obtained by using the root of the yucca plant  
H: 7.75" D: 8.75" Original Collection

## Jicarillo Apache

The Jicarillo (meaning basket) Apache were given their name by the Spanish, presumably because of the many small baskets they were making at the time of contact. At one time nomadic, they eventually settled in the north-western New Mexico area.

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19th century deep coiled basket of willow or cottonwood. The designs in red were achieved from a yucca root dye. Small extension of coil forms handle at side.

H:9.5" D:6"

Original Collection



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## Mescalero Apache

The Spanish also bestowed the name Mescalero to the people who ate the mescal cactus. For an extended time this tribe roamed the Rio Grande Valley, but eventually they settled in south central New Mexico.

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19th century coiled bowl. This basket has a 3-rod flat coil construction, sewn with split yucca leaves. The Mescalero Apache colored design is typically a bold form such as the diamond shapes evidenced here. In addition to the brown root and bark, various parts of the yucca plant were employed to produce orange, red and green.

H: 4" D: 12.75"

Original Collection

tion

## Chitimacha

Cane weaving is thought to have originated with the Chitimacha (or Chetimache). An Eastern Woodland tribe, they were located on the lands of the Mississippi River Delta. Their basketry expertise earned them their name, "they possess cooking vessels," assigned to them by the neighboring Choctaw.

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19th century cane-twilled plaited basket. The dried cane utilized by this tribe was either green or yellow in its natural state. Twilled plaiting is a form of basketwork popular with both the Chitimacha and the Choctaw, producing diagonal, circular or zigzag patterns. This rectangular basket displays a geometric design for which the Chitimacha are especially noted, as well as a decoration of cotton tufts and a sinew-reinforced rim.

H: 4" W : 3" L: 3.75"

Original Collection



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## Choctaw

The Choctaw tribe of the Muskogean linguistic family were a part of the people dubbed "Creek" by early settlers, supposedly due to the location of their tribal land at the source of various east- and south-flowing waterways. One of the "Five Civilized Tribes" (because they had adopted European agricultural and religious customs), they were relocated to Arkansas and Oklahoma in the 1830s. Some managed to evade this removal and remained on their homeland keeping the traditional lifestyle intact.

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19th century twilled cane gift basket with baled handle. This form was common among the Choctaw tribe, and could be used to carry various objects. Executed in natural and dyed cane, the black is from a black walnut dye and the red results from combining Texas Oak bark and black gum.

H:18" W : 6" L: 1.75"

Original Collection



19th century heart-shaped cane twilled gift basket. The oval opening and pointed base gave the basket its unique shape, which indicated that the contents were a gift from the heart. Cane was the only basketry material used by the Choctaw tribe.

H: 9" W : 3.75" L: 13"

Original Collection



## Seminole

This Florida tribe was given the name Seminole, Spanish for "wild ones." They escaped to Florida after breaking free from British slavery in the northern colonies. Later, escaped black slaves settling near the Seminole joined ranks with the tribe based on a shared hatred of slavery.

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20th century coiled trinket basket, constructed by securing pine needle coils with diagonal stitches of beige thread. The lid displays open-work flower design woven from the threads.

H: 2" D: 5"

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## Ojibwa

The Ojibwa tribe of the Algonquin nation were a Woodland tribe. Occupying lands between the St. Lawrence River and the Hudson Bay, their most available medium was the bark of the abundant birch, which they harvested and folded to form containers. Another utilized tree was the sugar maple, their source for making sugar.

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19th century birchbark basket. The exterior is stained dark brown and incised with designs of leaves and vines. Reed caning secures the wood strip reinforcement to the rim.

H: 8.75" W : 7.25" L: 9.5"

Original Collection



19th century birchbark trinket basket with lid. Bands of coiled sweetgrass border the exterior, and the lid is decorated with porcupine quill embroidery.

H: 3.5" D: 5"

Original Collection



19th century birchbark makuk . This gathering basket was formed by folding bark, securing it with reed caning, then sealed with pitch. The roll of sweetgrass bordering the rim was valued as a strong weaving material as well as adding a pleasant scent.

H: 6" D: 14.75"

Original Collection



19th century birchbark gathering basket. Rim is reinforced with willow and decorated with several multicolored glass beads. Rawhide handle.

H: 3" D: 3.5"

Original Collection

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## Huron

The Huron Indians of the Lake Ontario region had settlements characterized by bark-covered longhouses. Early explorer, Samuel de Champlain, convinced this tribe to battle neighboring Mohawks to secure the St. Lawrence Valley, in the attempt to increase French fur trade.

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20th century octagon-shaped birchbark basket. Black thread and sweet grass fasten the individual panels together. The floral motifs are formed with dyed moose hair embroidery.

H: 2.125" D: 9.875"

Barberton Public Library



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